1: Ingrams G-5 (1934-35)1936 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

mean that his position *vis à vis* the Confederation is wholly negligible. The influence that an individual ruler exerts over a confederation of tribesmen depends to a large extent on the personality of the individual and I found plenty of evidence that Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur is universally respected, admired, and held in affection amongst the Shenafir tribesmen. Even though his word is not universally law his services are much sought in mediation between different factions, and there is no lack of factions in the Confederation. Along the length of the valley from the east of Shibam to the east of Tarim, which is considered Kathīri, village after village is a small city-state on its own. It is difficult to pass from one to another, even now that the motor-car has come, without the traditional *siyar* or escort.

Typical of the situation has been the state of war that has existed for some time between the Āl 'Umar and Āl 'Āmr clans. They have centred round the respectably-sized town of Al Ghurfa between Shibam and Seiyun. Five or six years ago some of the tribesmen of the Āl 'Umar started interfering with the inhabitants of Al Ghurfa. Bin 'Abdat, the *'aqīl* of the Āl 'Āmr, protested to Salim bin Ja'fer, the *'aqīl* of the Āl 'Umar, and proposed that they should unite to make peace in Al Ghurfa. Hitherto disputes in the town were commonly referred to the settlement of one Sheikh Bā Abūd, but this arrangement appears to have broken down. Bin 'Abdat informed Bin Ja'fer that if he would not help him, he (Bin 'Abdat) would establish control in the town himself. As Bin Ja'fer did not give him support he took action himself and established order. The new state of affairs was not popular, and probably resulted in some further disorder which had its repercussions beyond local limits. At this juncture the Qu'aiti *wazir* came to Shibam and brought pressure on Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur to unite with him and Salim bin Ja'fer in compelling Bin 'Abdat to vacate Al Ghurfa, and retire to his original place outside. Sultan 'Ali bin Mansur marched against Bin 'Abdat with one gun and some troops; Seiyid Hussein, the Qu'aiti *wazir*, also brought a gun and some troops from Shibam, Salim bin Ja'fer brought his own men, and the three forces collected at Al Ghiyel. The town of Al Ghurfa was bombarded, and, as it was described to me, " they had a good battle but without success ".

Seiyid Hussein, the *wazir*, retired after having successfully complicated the issue, and Sultan 'Ali immediately followed suit, leaving Bin 'Abdat and Bin Ja'fer to fight it out together. Both sides entrenched themselves. The elaborate system of fortifications and communication trenches, still visible at Al Ghurfa, reminded me strongly of France. They extend over nearly a mile, and in this small patch of the valley both sides lived an uncomfortable life for several years. Any cultivation that was done was done under difficulties, and the fields could only be approached through trenches. Salim bin Ja'fer enlivened the proceedings by importing a sort of armoured car from Java. This is now derelict

715 and is offered for sale at Al Ghurfa. It has yet, presumably, other chances of featuring in small wars up or down the valley.

[726] The situation sounds almost incredible, but the war continued for several years. At last Sultan 'Ali supported by the Al Kaf Seiyids, the strongest influence for peace in Kathīri territory, thought matters had gone far enough, and invited the disputants to Seiyun to conclude a peace. The terms suggested were agreed to on all points except for one requiring Bin 'Abdat to demolish two small forts. The matter appeared to have reached a deadlock when a Seiyid of Aden, of Hadhramaut origin, Seiyid 'Abdur Rahman al Jifri, proceeded to the Hadhramaut and offered his services in the settlement of the trouble. He is a friend of Bin 'Abdat's, and Seiyids 'Abdur Rahman and Bubekr al Kaf sent him to Bin 'Abdat to advise him not to hold out on account of the two small forts. Matters were probably ripe for a settlement as everybody was tired of hostilities, but Seiyid 'Abdur Rahman very creditably brought the feud to a satisfactory conclusion. What was even more satisfactory was that a gathering of more than a hundred representatives of all sections of the Shenafir was held at Seiyun, and Seiyid 'Abdur Rahman succeeded in assisting Sultan 'Ali, backed by the Al Kaf Seiyids, to negotiate a truce between all the Shenafir tribes. This agreement, which takes effect from the 1st of Sha'bān 1353 (9th November 1934) provides for a truce of two years and two months in all matters relating to blood feuds between the various tribes, and gives also a guarantee of five years security for travellers on the routes.

It may thus be that the foundations have now been laid for an era of peace in Kathīri land, and the time seems to be propitious for the establishment of a greater solidarity in Kathīri rule. There are certainly strong elements in favour of peace.. Foremost of all is Sultan 'Ali himself. He is a man of culture and very charming personality with that kind of magnetism which inspires instinctive respect and affection. I do not think anybody who has met him can fail to receive the impression that he is a good man in the best sense of the word, nor can anyone who has discussed the situation with him fail to be impressed with the earnestness of his desire for peace. In this desire he is warmly and ably supported by many of the leading families, of whom the most important are the Al Kaf and Saqqaf Seiyids. Although they are Seiyids the measures of reform which these families support are many of them in flagrant opposition to the old conservative policy of the Seiyids, which for long maintained that body as the most powerful and the most desperately retrogressive party in the Hadhramaut. These families have shown that they can still play a very important part in the destinies of the country, and have in fact earned the right to speak in common voice with the Sultan in pressing reforms. It may also be observed that they are the heaviest, as well as the most willing, [651] taxpayers in the country. Their annual contributions on Government and charitable undertakings amount to at least $70,000 a

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and the people are natural Muslims having learnt in a hard school absolute submission to the will of God. Religious fanaticism is strongest where the seiyids are strongest. In other places there is greater tolerance and, among the bedouins, it is what a man is rather than what his religion is that counts.

When we started everybody wanted independence. Many of the old secluded seiyids, whose ideas of independence merely amounted to the exclusion of infidels, had sons and relations who read the Egyptian papers and their ideas of independence were based on grandiose schemes of complete self-government. Some of them, who thought themselves moderate, demanded no more than independence on the Egyptian and Iraqi models and talked airily of Parliaments and so on. In Singapore and Java in 1939 I had petitions presented to me three times demanding this sort of independence. Once at Solo the deputation was pointed out to me as representative: it contained seiyids, tribesmen and a Sultan of the Kathiri family. Only the last had ever been in the Hadhramaut. He asked me if he might see me privately after the meeting and then asked me to arrange independence for Jahiz. Jahiz was his village in the Wadi 'Amd and consists of five houses. The tribesmen, settled and bedouin, wanted independence; the bedouin claim was at least easy to understand for all it amounted to was that their freedom in the hills and deserts should be undisturbed. The settled tribesmen were and are more difficult. Every little section considered itself independent, and the more powerful, who could afford not only to arm themselves but to buy and arm private forces of slaves, did all they could to extend their boundaries at the expense of their neighbours.

The strangest example of this kind of campaign was that of the Bin 'Abdat section of the Kathiri tribe, who own much landed property in Singapore and Java. The treaty chief of the Kathiris is the Kathiri Sultan whose capital is Seiyun. About 1928 the head of the Bin 'Abdat section forcibly occupied the walled town of Al Ghurfa, belonging to some unarmed sheikhs. This brought him into conflict with the Kathiri Sultan, who was supported by the Qu'aiti Sultan, and with the neighbouring heads of other Kathiri sections. War ensued which carried on with little interruption till 1937. Bin 'Abdat built up a respectable force of slaves and tribesmen of his own and constructed an elaborate system of forts and trenches which extended right across the Wadi Hadhramaut some three miles or more, and almost to the Qu'aiti-Kathiri boundary at Shibam. In the course of the fighting, a curious armoured vehicle was imported from Java, which was intended to be towed by a motor car into the enemy camp. Bin 'Abdat acquired a very large stock of ammunition and really good rifles at very high prices. The Qu'aiti Sultan brought artillery, ancient and modern, to the aid of the Kathiri, but no decision was ever reached.

When I came to the Hadhramaut in 1936 Bin 'Abdat instructed his lawyer in Singapore to address a letter to the Government in which he claimed to be an "independent rajah." He was informed that the only recognized treaty chiefs in the main Hadhramaut were the Qu'aiti and

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669 Kathiri Sultans and that he was the recognized head of a Kathiri section
648 subordinate to the latter. In 1937 after a lot of persuasion he subscribed to the three years truce. This chief loyally kept the peace and helped in maintaining peace till his death early in 1939, when he was succeeded by an irresponsible nephew who after visiting Java and Singapore to collect his inheritance, returned to Hadhramaut determined to extend his boundaries and influence.

In 1939 my wife and I also visited the East Indies and while in Batavia were entertained by the Bin 'Abdat family at a tea and cocktail party at the Hôtel des Galleries, a large modern hotel belonging to the family. Round the walls of the room in which the reception was held were pictures of Al Ghurfa labelled "Al Ghurfa in the Hadhramaut over which this family has fought so long."

Late in 1939 the new Bin 'Abdat started fresh operations. He extended his fortifications and subsidized a large bedouin tribe, the Hamumis, amongst whom the Government was trying to make peace, to make the then one motor road unsafe and to oppose the Government in every possible way. A good deal of fighting ensued in which both the Hamumis and the Qu'aiti troops had casualties. He also brought Hamumi bedouins as his soldiers into the Wadi Hadhramaut itself where they made the road unsafe for travellers. He arrested and maltreated persons who had recourse to the Sultan in their troubles. The Sultans were supported by His Majesty's Government and action was taken against him. He submitted in May 1940, but did not observe the condition he had accepted and until the fall of Singapore and Java eventually caused his funds to dry up, was always a source of trouble. For it was the profits of the hotel and rents of his properties in the Far East which had enabled the family to keep their wars going. Many Hadhrami chiefs did the same thing, but none on the
627 Bin 'Abdat scale. And when litigants in Java lost their cases in the Java Courts it was not unusual for them to repay their opponents in the Hadhramaut by having their families shot or their homes burnt.

631 There were supposed to be only two Governments in Hadhramaut, the
619 Qu'aiti and Kathiri, but in fact there were about two thousand—the fourteen hundred tribes and sections who had signed the truce and several hundreds more of independent villages ruled by mansabs and sheikhs.

185 It was considerations such as these that I had to bear in mind when I thought of the kind of organization which would be most likely to succeed in the Hadhramaut. The only things that seemed to offer a favourable opening were a widespread desire for peace and a genuine anxiety on the part of the Sultan for improvements in Governmental and social services. Apart from these factors I had the instruments I have referred to, and the general indication that one should try to follow as far as possible the methods adopted in the Unfederated Malay States, to guide me in forming an organization.